

'an exercise and experiment in the oral history of archaeology'. Richard Bradley then made a salient point. He reminded the audience that when he came to archaeology as a law student in the 1970s, there were no venues in Britain to meet 'one's own contemporaries, engage in theoretical debate, try out new ideas before a live audience'. Inspired by American social and intellectual influences and the Society of American Archaeology's meetings and by Lewis Binford and Kent Flannery's work, Colin Renfrew and Andrew Fleming started TAG as a meeting place at which 'all speakers in a session could attend on equal terms rather employed, unemployed, new comers or ancestors to discuss new ideas'. Bradley concluded that 'TAG has succeeded in Britain by bringing together those two strands, the professional and the amateur/student, all interested in theoretical debate'. The film of this discussion is being edited by Emily Walker from UCLA and Sam Wakeford from Cambridge University. Once approved by the narrators, it will be available on the TAG web site: <http://antiquity.ac.uk/tag/index.html>.

AND, you are invited to several future events. Stephen Shennan, Director of the Institute of Archaeology at University College London, and I are organising an oral-historical retrospective of the Institute. This discussion will be held at the Institute in London on 11 November 2009. The panellists will include two 95 year olds, Beatrice de Cardi and Rachel Maxwell-Hyslop, who worked with Tessa and Mortimer Wheeler as they created the Institute during the 1930s. Peter Gathercole and John Alexander, graduate students during the early 1950s, Ian Hodder, one of the first undergraduates from the late 1960s, and three Directors, John Evans, David Harris and Stephen Shennan who will contribute their memories. The resulting film will be used during orientation for new students and as a reference source on the Institute's web site. It will augment Lydia Carr's research on the Wheelers.

AND, Sir David Attenborough has accepted our invitation to speak about his experiences as Commissioning Editor during the early 1950s of 'Animal, Vegetable, Mineral', the most influential and pioneering television archaeology show in British history. Sir David writes 'I have many vivid memories of Glyn Daniel, Mortimer Wheeler and many others as well as having something to do with Buried Treasure, Chronicle and the Sidbury Hill excavation. It would be a pleasure to talk about this'. Apparently, no one had ever asked him to do this!

Lastly, 'memories of excavating' is planned for late 2009 with the Editor of *Antiquity*, Martin Carver, speaking on his life in the Army and at Sutton Hoo. Mike Pitts, Editor of *British Archaeology*, will discuss his restaurant at Stonehenge and will also act as Chair. I would be grateful for further suggestions from the readers of the *Bulletin*.

If you wish copies of any of these films or if you wish to attend, please contact me at [pjs1011@cam.ac.uk](mailto:pjs1011@cam.ac.uk).

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## A Wrap-up of the AREA Project

These notes (which derive from an AREA publication edited by Nathan Schlanger, Jana Marikova and Sonia Levina reporting on the AREA conference *Sites of Memory* held in 2006) were submitted to the *BHA* by **Nathan Schlanger**. In his words they represent 'something of a rounding up' of the whole AREA project, the full details of which can be found at: <http://www.area-archives.org/publ.html>.

This has been a long-running project of the first importance to the history of European archaeology and I welcome this communication as testimony to what the participants have achieved.

## Archives of Memory

A note on the Archives of European Archaeology (AREA) network and its scientific seminars (1998–

2008): Alain Schnapp, David Van Reybrouck, Nathan Schlanger, Sonia Lévin, Noël Coye, Oscar Moro Abadía. Taking here the notion of memory in both its collective and effective dimensions, the present publications constitutes an appropriate moment, after a decade of AREA activities, to briefly recall some of the main objectives and achievements of this European network.

### **Aims of the AREA Network**

AREA – Archives of European Archaeology – is a research network dedicated to the history of archaeology, with particular emphasis on the archives of the discipline, their study and preservation. Since its launching, support for the AREA network was generously awarded by the Raphael Programme (AREA phase I, 1998–1999), and subsequently by the Culture 2000 Programme of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (AREA phase II, 1999–2000, an experimental measure, and AREA phase III, 2001–2004, followed by AREA phase IV, 2005–2008, both multi-annual cultural collaboration projects). Throughout its phases, the AREA network has welcomed a growing number of partner institutions from across the continent – university departments and institutes, museums, research centres and public bodies – working together within a common European framework (see below for the list of partners).

This continuous support has enabled the AREA network to develop the following major objectives (see also *www.area-archives.org*):

- To promote research on the history of archaeology.
- To study, catalogue and help preserve the main archives bearing on the memory, achievements and heritage of the discipline.
- To investigate the interrelations between the development of archaeology and the formation of cultural and political identities.

The premise on which the AREA network proceeds is that the history of European archaeology is a complex field of research in which national traditions and language barriers have often inhibited a fuller understanding of the disciplinary past, and notably of those aspects involving cross-boundary research programmes and international orientations. Therefore, appreciating the impact of antiquarian travellers, the Romantic Movement, colonial enterprises or the Second World War on the practice of archaeology requires researchers to display a truly pan-European perspective. Moreover, the study of the past has been repeatedly invoked to legitimise political entities, but also to challenge them: alongside extreme forms of nationalist abuses, archaeology has often contributed to a sense of political and cultural identity on regional, national and transnational levels. By organising research projects, regular meetings, workshops, publications and its internet site, AREA seeks to enhance understanding of this multifarious field, to address its theoretical and methodological premises, and to highlight its broader contribution to both historical analysis and contemporary practice.

In addition to its collaborative dimensions, a particular resource enhanced by the AREA network is that of archives. All too often, the history of archaeology is being studied and written exclusively on the basis of published materials, which by their nature convey only selected aspects of the wider archaeological enterprise. The archives of the discipline, however, contain an enormously rich potential for research into the less visible but nonetheless revelatory dimensions of the field. Correspondence, minutes, internal reports, drawings, excavation notebooks, and photographs are not only indispensable resources for historians of science, they often constitute the only remaining documentation regarding numerous archaeological remains and research projects uncovered or undertaken in the past. Scattered as they are across university libraries, museum depots, government archives, and private collections, these sources are often difficult to access and assess for their worth. Besides compiling an online catalogue with the most important or representative of these archival fonds, and besides encouraging archive-holding repositories and institutions to valorise their fonds, AREA also actively engages in the exploitation of these archives through dedicated research projects.

## Some Achievements: Databases, Publications, Exhibitions

In line with its concern for the primary sources of archaeology, one of the major undertakings of the AREA network has been to create a European-wide database of archival fonds bearing on the history of archaeology. As it has been successively developed, the AREA database provides an inventory and catalogue of the principal relevant archival fonds recorded among the participating countries, and in Europe at large. The structure is based on the ISAD(G) norms set out by the International Council of Archives (ICA) for the description of archival fonds, enriched with additional fields of specific interest to archaeological research. Websearching can be done through keywords and free text, as well as fonds creator and history. In addition, two further databases have been produced and are being expanded by the AREA network – one on ‘archaeo-biograms’, with basic biographical details on a range of 19th and 20th centuries European archaeologists, and the other a bibliographic database on French antiquarian books, from the beginnings of print to the end of the eighteenth century.

AREA activities have generated over the years quite a range of publications, be they by partners on their own, or collectively. Collective AREA publications include *Ancestral Archives*. Explorations in the history of archaeology, published as a special section of the journal *Antiquity*, 76/291, March 2002 (edited by Nathan Schlanger), which stemmed from the activities of AREA I and II, as presented notably in a special session at the Lisbon EAA annual meeting in September 2000. A session on the history of archaeology of the ancient Greece, held at the Lyon EAA annual meeting in September 2004, was published as a special issue of the *European Review of History*, 13/4, December 2006 (edited by Sonia Lévin and François de Polignac). The AREA meeting in February 2006 in Prague is published as *Sites of Memory*. Between Scientific Research and Collective Representations, in *Castrum Pragense* (the present publication). Last but not least, the international conference held in June 2004 in Goteborg, as the culmination of AREA III, has appeared as *Archives, Ancestors, Practices: Archaeology in the Light of Its History*, Berghahn Book, Oxford/New York (2008, edited by Nathan Schlanger and Jarl Nordbladh).

Other collective AREA publications are in various stages of preparation, such as ‘Historical perspectives on the material culture of archaeology’, ‘Relitti Riletti/Reread Wreckage: transformations of ruins and cultural identity’ (to be edited by Marcello Barbanera), and ‘Speaking materials: Sources for the history of archaeology’ (to be edited by Dietrich Hakelberg). Among the partners’ publications which relate directly to their AREA activities can be mentioned: in Spain: ‘Los archivos de la arqueología ibérica: una arqueología para dos Españas. Serie Textos 1. Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Jaén y centro Andaluz de Arqueología Ibérica’ (2006, edited by Arturo Ruiz, Alberto Sanchez and Juan Pedro Bellon); in France: ‘Archives de l’archéologie européenne (AREA)’, a special issue of the journal *Nouvelles de l’archéologie* (number 110, 2007, edited by Alain Schnapp, Nathan Schlanger, Sonia Lévin and Noël Coye); and in Romania: a special section of the *Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche și Arheologie* (Tomul 58:3–4; 2007 directed by Mircea Babes).

As part of its main activities during its fourth phase (2005–2008), the AREA network has conceived, implemented and managed a travelling exhibition on ‘The Making of European Archaeology’. Thirteen richly illustrated panels (220 x 80cm in dimension) realised in six languages (Polish, Spanish, Czech, German, English and French) highlights changing views and uses of the past, in Europe and beyond, from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century. More specifically, four themes – which have been researched by AREA partners – are discussed and illustrated across the panels: Antiquarian Traditions (collecting and collections, field practices), Archaeology Abroad (archaeology and nation states, informal networks and international institutions), Archaeology Under Power (dictators and their past) and Sites of Memory (living sites, science and collective memory).

Since February the exhibition has appeared in several European countries, hosted by AREA partners and associated archaeological institutions. These have included so far: Poznan Archaeological Museum, Institutul de Arheologie ‘Vasile Parvan’ in Bucharest, Prague Castle, The Centro Andaluz

de Arqueologia Ibérica at the University of Jaén, the Museu Monográfico de Conimbriga, the Maison de l'archéologie et de l'ethnologie in Nanterre. The exhibition was also presented at the 14th meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists in Malta in September 2008, at the Ecole française d'Athènes, at the Institut national d'histoire de l'art. Various other venues are scheduled until end of 2009, proving its success among the different publics of archaeology. PDF versions of the exhibition can be seen on the AREA website, and a catalogue is in preparation.

### **The AREA Partnership**

Originally initiated by Sander van der Leeuw, Giovanni Scichilone and Alain Schnapp, the AREA network has grown under the leadership of the latter, and through the scientific coordination of David van Reybrouck (AREA I, II) and of Nathan Schlanger and Sonia Lévin (AREA III, IV) together with Noël Coye and Oscar Moro Abadia. The institutional lead-partners and project leaders were the Maison des sciences de l'homme – MSH (AREA I, II), the Institut national d'histoire de l'art – INHA (AREA III), and the Maison de l'archéologie et de l'ethnologie – CNRS (AREA IV). European consultancy was provided throughout the project by Gian Giuseppe Simeone and Culturelab.

The following institutions were and are partners of the AREA network (the AREA phase in which they participated is in parenthesis): National Archive of Monuments, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Athens, Greece (AREA I, II, III, IV); Centro Andaluz de Arqueologia Ibérica, Jaén, Spain (I, II, III, IV); Department of Archaeology, University of Göteborg, Sweden (I, II, III, IV); Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme – MSH, Paris, France (I, II); Institut national d'histoire de l'art – INHA, Paris, France (II, III, IV); Maison de l'archéologie et de l'ethnologie – CNRS, Nanterre, France (IV); Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Berlin, Germany (I, II); McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge, United Kingdom (I, II); Service de Préhistoire, Université de Liège, Belgium (I, II); Archeologisch Diensten Centrum, Bunschoten, Netherlands (II); Università degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza, Rome, Italy (II, IV); Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, United Kingdom (III); The Butrint Foundation, London/University of East Anglia, United Kingdom (III); Department of Archaeology, University College Cork, Ireland (III); Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, Granada, Spain (III); Department of History, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium (III); Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Archäologie des Mittelalters, Freiburg University, Germany (III, IV); Poznan Archaeological Museum, Poznan, Poland (III, IV); Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, United Kingdom (IV); Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic (IV); Institutul de Arheologie 'vasile Parvan', Bucharest, Romania (IV); Museu Monográfico de Conimbriga, Coimbra, Portugal (IV); Professur für Ur- und Frühgeschichte der Universität Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany (IV).

### **AREA Scientific Seminars and Conferences**

As already indicated, this publication stems from one of the scientific seminar of the AREA network. The practice of holding 'scientific seminars' alongside the regular project meetings was introduced to AREA early on. The first part of each meeting was of course dedicated to various essential 'internal matters', regarding aspects of coordination, management, reporting, and achievements of the project itself. Upon this, time was set aside – half a day or a full day – for a small-scale thematic research conference, with up to a dozen speakers contributing their findings and insights on set topics related to the archives and history of archaeology. Both audience and speakers of these events included members of the AREA network, but also several guests who were invited to contribute or to attend, notably by the host institution and organiser of the meeting. All interested persons made aware of these events through various announcements or word-of-mouth could of course be present free of charge, though in some cases registration in advance was required. The theme and unfolding of each seminar was set after discussions within the AREA partnership, usually from one meeting to the next, and obviously with important input from the host partner (this was notably the case with the conference in Rome in February 2007). Indeed, one the main aims of these seminars was precisely to enable the host

institution to highlight its particular fields of interest and expertise: in addition to the coherence and complementarities of the network itself, it was considered important that each partner should be able to show to their own institutional structures and colleagues – in their university, museum or research centre – what was it that they were actually doing as part of the AREA network. The seminars were a particularly effective way of ‘broadening’ the network in this way: they created simultaneously a formal venue and a forum for sociability that encouraged intellectual exchanges at a European scale. The topics presented were considered important or innovative or representative of the host partner themselves, and at the same time they served to broaden the scope and bring together a wider range of experience. In this context, the possibility of publishing the proceedings of these seminars was seen as optional, depending on the quality and coherence of the contributions, and on the drive and availability of the organisers-cum-editors (see above for some such publications). In addition, during AREA IV, particular links were sought between the seminars and the conception and contents of the planned travelling exhibition – this was the case with the Prague seminar, which informed the sites of memory panels in the exhibition.

### Concluding Words

Nathan Schlanger and Jana Mařková-Kubková: *On lieux de mémoire and other archaeological constructs. Some preliminary considerations.*

By now a well-established label and domain of investigations, the concept of ‘site of memory’ remains full of evocations. At one end of the spectrum, witness the proliferation of internet websites and blogs dedicated to the sites of this or that memory of some specified populations, events or locales, often enhanced with recommended tourist itineraries and conveniently placed hotel accommodations. At the other end, consider the inclusion of *lieux de mémoire* as one of the panel descriptors for ‘The study of the past and of cultural artefacts’ within the humanities and social sciences board of the newly created European Research Council (ERC). En vogue as it has clearly become, equally entrenched in grassroots and institutional worldviews, there is nothing staid or passé about the concept: the texts assembled in this volume aim to show that ‘sites of memory’ is still something of a conceptual orchard with promising fruits yet to bear, for archaeology as well as for historical and anthropological studies.

The conceptual grounds of this concept, as it were, are for once reasonably well mapped and acknowledged. Initially, in the formulation given to it by the French historian Pierre Nora in the early 1980s, the *lieu de mémoire* was something of a historiographical ploy to challenge univocal representations of the past and bypass prevailing essentialist perspectives (cf. Nora 1984; 1984–1992; in English Nora 1989; Nora and Kritzman 1996).

The aim was then to reach the history of abstract or all-encompassing entities such as the nation or society from the bottom up, by drawing attention to the diversity of substrates within which, in various contexts and at various scales, these entities come to be physically or symbolically incarnated. Such aspirations proved well in tune with hitherto untapped sociological perspectives on the frameworks, forms and maintenance of memory (e.g. Halbwachs 1925; Connerton 1989), and also with like-minded anthropological appraisals of civilisations as significant composites of mundane practices and productions (cf. Mauss 2006; Elias 1994). Altogether, with its trans-disciplinary and evocative potential, the concept contributed decisively to the transformation of memory and its uses (memorialisation, commemoration, incarnation, identification, recognition) into productive topics of scholarly research. It must be granted however that this topicalisation is still in the process of reaching beyond French and English readerships, and it is hoped that the present multi-lingual publication will make a contribution to this end. Czech historiography, for example, is only now beginning to take on board the works of Pierre Nora, of which only extracts are available in various Czech journals, thanks notably to francophone philosophers like Karel Thein. A recent translation of Simon Schama’s 1995 *Landscape and Memory* (Krajina a pam 2007) is a step in the right direction, though it is still seen as relevant primarily to artists and architects.

## Lieux and Sites

Within the archaeological community, interest in the topic of *lieux de mémoire* continues unabated, but it is important at the onset to recognise and avoid a potential pitfall. In line with his encompassing objectives, Nora allowed for these *lieux de mémoire* to range in their forms 'from the most material and concrete, such as memorials for the dead and national archives, to the most abstract intellectual constructs, such as the notion of lineage or generation or even region' (Nora 1992:15).

The multi-volume publishing enterprise he orchestrated included therefore contributions on two archaeological sites, two haut lieux probably considered along the more material end of the continuum: one concerned Alésia (Buchsenschutz and Schnapp 1992), and the other, more wide-ranging geographically as well as politically, Lascaux (Demoule 1992). Since then, however, the notion of lieu, and more particularly its near-automatic rendition in English as 'site' (rather than, for example, 'place', 'realm', or 'focus'), has inadvertently encouraged a confusing conceptual shortcut which many archaeologists have not resisted: that of reducing or conflating this notion of lieu with that so familiar of site – the site which, over the past three centuries or so, has replaced the 'cabinet' to become the central locus, both physical and imaginary, of the archaeological enterprise (see on that Patrick 1985; Lucas 2001; Edgeworth 2006).

Such a conflation of the historical or memorial 'site' with the archaeological one is not to displease all practitioners, inasmuch as it tacitly legitimises and at the same time adds a veneer of sophistication to the 'methodological materialism' that so characterises the discipline (vide Hawkes' 1954 canonical 'ladder of inference', and its subsequent renditions). Nevertheless, the point to keep in mind is that archaeological sites are only on some exceptional occasions a lieu in any meaningful, symbolic sense of the term. Likewise, the notion of 'mémoire', especially in what was (at least initially) a radical or alternative context, is by no means synonymous with that of history, let alone with some celebratory chronicle or even official record of discovery or exploration. Put otherwise, there can be no question of considering archaeological sites as necessarily bestowed with 'memory', even in potential, nor indeed of applying the notion of 'memory' to any straightforward history of research on some given sites. As Oscar Moro Abadía reminds us (this volume) these histories, especially when dealt with in preliminary paragraphs, are usually scene-setters that serve as intra-disciplinary tactical devices for contemporary practitioners.

Be it as it may, once the 'sites' of memory and of archaeology have been distinguished, there is scope to recover and reinvest them together. It has after all been part of the original project to promote some form of micro-historical particularism, and archaeologists, with their *terre à terre* approach, are often well placed to consider matters from the ground up, meticulously seeking concrete evidence of past events, process and structures, thereby partaking in what *Annales* historians Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre used to call *l'histoire militante*. Whatever the historiographic position chosen, the key point about the notion of *lieux de mémoire* is that it leads us archaeologists beyond the past 'as it happened' – or as it is deemed and reconstructed to have happened – towards a second degree past, a past as it has been perceived, represented, appropriated, used, and reutilised time and again in the successive presents that have unfolded since its coming into consciousness.

## Archaeology – Post-facto, ab initio

What is then this past that is entering consciousness, and whose? One way to follow up this lead is by examining the position of archaeology in the process, according to whether it initiates, manufactures and eventually controls the knowledge available on the site in question, or rather reacts and adapts to its pre-existence.

Remains of the past that pre-exist their disciplinary existence are usually of the monumental kind: they provide an inescapable presence in the surrounding landscape, perceived, reflected on, included in local toponymies and topographies, enhanced through literary descriptions and visual depictions,

and indeed transposed and reconstructed within both everyday mental maps and extraordinary cosmologies. Examples of such salient sites include the Athenian Acropolis, the Roman Forum, the Old City of Jerusalem, and also, in this volume, Prague castle (cf. Jan Frolík, Jana Maíková-Kubková), Mount íp (Karel Sklenár) and also, to a certain extent, Mount Olympus (Sonia Lévin). Substantially different are the sites that come to be known through archaeological investigations, be it upon their deliberate search and unearthing, or following their fortuitous discovery. As their description is first couched in the disciplinary language of archaeology, this could be expected to influence, if not determine, their subsequent intelligibility and broader cultural appropriation. In this volume, the Swiss lake dwellings (Marc-Antoine Kaeser) and the Palaeolithic art cave of Altamira (Oscar Moro Abadia) are among such sites, while other examples include Troy, Biskupin and Masada, as well as the early hominid ‘cradle of humankind’ site in today’s South Africa.

Related to Karel Sklenár’s distinction between accidental and motivated archaeological localities (this volume), this differentiation does appear to make sense, but it immediately calls for a number of critical comments. To begin with, the implied portrayal of archaeology as a singular, unitary phenomenon that suddenly materializes to take sites and things in hand is surely too simplistic. Should we restrict the emergence of the archaeological discipline, with its professional standards and accredited methodology, to the second half of the nineteenth century? Where would this leave the previous generations of antiquarians, whose field practices and erudite imagination have clearly shaped all subsequent consciousness of such sites as Stonehenge and Carnac? Where, for the matter, would this leave other traditions of sustained interest in material vestiges of the past, such as those prevailing in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, in China or in Mesoamerica (see Schnapp 1993)?

Next, it would be fallacious to expect that those sites that come to be known to us through archaeology (however defined) are somehow less imbued with ideological potential and connotations than those pre-existing ones, which for generations had been widely accessible to accumulate on them lay claims and meanings. In this volume, Oscar Moro Abadia relates the discovery of the Altamira cave, or rather the retrospective historiographies of the allegedly belated recognition of its art, to the instrumentalisation of the discipline as a vehicle of national prestige, exemplifying Spanish resistance to French scientific and cultural domination. Marc-Antoine Kaeser for his part shows here how archaeological appreciations of the lake dwellings sites corresponded from the onset with the ‘identity profile’ imagined by the leadership of the nascent Swiss confederation. With all their pluridisciplinary combination of ethnographic and naturalist approaches, these studies contributed to the creation of this peaceful, hard-working, equalitarian, platform dwelling ‘mythe lacustre’ which still lingers today. The rapid integration of many archaeological sites, including those accidentally discovered, into contemporary agendas – think for example of Biskupin, swaying upon its 1933 discovery between Polish and German scholarship, Slavic and Germanic interpretations – raises a further comment.

### **Mythical Places**

With the notion of *lieux de mémoire* archaeology is effectively invited to confront or at least problematise some of its core assumptions regarding the evidential independence and primacy of the past. Not only is there no guarantee that sites known through archaeology will be handled in some ‘strictly’ scientific manner, it can also be suggested, more radically, that the very coming into being of these discovered archaeological sites might actually be predicated on their mythical pre-existence.

Kaeser recognises some affinities between the reconstruction of lake dwellings and the utopic golden age of the local scholar Rousseau, and then reminds us that myths (in their Lévi-Straussian rendition) cannot be reduced to scientific knowledge, nor are they within reach of rational argumentation – they primarily function as partly conscious narratives that reconcile contradictions and express inner truths or beliefs deeply anchored in the collective imagination. Such mythical qualities are certainly present in Mount Olympus. The paradoxical situation, as Sonia Lévin shows, is that the records and descriptions proposed by generations of bards and artists since Antiquity about Mount Olympus, as

the domain of the immortal Gods, are overall far more comprehensive and rich in detail than most of what has been known since Antiquity about Mount Olympus, as an actual geographic mountain range. In this particular case, armchair travellers have had all the more freedom to let their imagination roam over the heavenly Olympus that there is actually so little on the earthly Olympus to bridle it. Paradoxically again, but possibly in keeping with the sacred sentiments of the ancients, there are hardly any physical monuments, ruined temples or colonnade rows on the mountain top to fix the sight (and site) of memory.

An almost opposite situation prevails in Masada – a remote hilltop with quite spectacular archaeological remains, on which imagination had for long remained silent. Indeed, Masada's fame rests also on its claimed anteriority as a site of memory, with the events surrounding the Roman conquest and domination of Jewish Palestine taken to incarnate, for the subsequent two thousand years of Diaspora, the principle of ultimate resistance in the name of religious ideals and political independence. But while the historical substrate of the AD 73 drama has been broadly documented through both Flavius Josephus and later Y. Yadin's archaeological excavations, claims of its powerful symbolic endurance in long term historical memory actually turn out to be a modern myth, an early twentieth century construct given simultaneously poetic and political expression in I. Lamdan's 1927 verse: 'Never shall Masada fall again' (see Lewis 1975 and Ben Yehuda 1995).

If Masada by the Dead Sea proves to be a retrospective *lieu de mémoire*, the so-called 'Cradle of humankind' early hominid World Heritage Site in Sterkfontein, located some 50 kilometres north of Johannesburg, is surely the real thing. As in most Palaeolithic or palaeo-anthropological sites, there is nothing remarkable to see there, rolling hills interspersed with crevasses into which Australopithecine bones and tools have accumulated over the past three million years (this possibly accounts for the glaring monumentality of the Maropeng Visitor centre). This archaeological site belongs emphatically to the *ab initio* variety, in that it was neither known nor thought of until its scientific discovery and study, from the 1930s onwards. And yet, the 'cradle of humankind' comes close to the ideal version of Nora's definition, as a symbolic substrate that reflects and accommodates long-term collective representations. The very idea that humankind might have had anything like a cradle, some original formative shelter zone from which it has emerged, gone forth and multiplied to rule the world, is surely a transposition of Garden of Eden (or Mount Olympus) mythologies, with stories of grace and fall and renaissance that serve to anchor our world, give it meaning and hope. Not surprisingly, the men who brought this site of memory into existence – Field Marshal Smuts from the 1920s onwards, and President Mbeki in post apartheid years – knew well to enlist it to their ongoing political projects, providing (besides tourist revenues) a comforting sense of human commonality (this 'big human family' so critiqued by Rolland Barthes and Donna Haraway) on which to weave moral and geopolitical designs (see Schlanger 2002; 2006; Bonner *et al.* 2008). What we have here then, is a *lieu de mémoire* that turns into an archaeological site that enlists archaeology to provide the props and ambiance for some social representations to take roots. Alongside their valuable fossils, the caves of Sterkfontein, Kromdraai and Swartkrans offer us an emptiness, a hollow which reflects on us and espouses our forms as we invest it. In this self-questioning vein, taking a historical view, can we not conjecture that such attempts at making myths empirical through archaeology are one of the hallmarks of our cultural modernity?

### **On Use and Utility – Identity, Memory, Heritage**

In some respects, sites of memory are somewhat akin to totems, as Durkheim (1912) interpreted them: a relatively arbitrary material element – a bird, a flag, but also a stone, a ruin, a cave or a salient feature in the landscape – selected during moments of intense social effervescence and endowed with symbolic significance, some collective ideal or aspiration that lasts in tangible form as an enduring synecdoche when the group dissolves back to its ordinary existence. By concentrating and concretising these memories, by making them perceptible, such sites can focalise versions of legitimacy and cohesion, render the past unambiguous or on the contrary cast it wide open, and then narrow the grounds and

draw the perimeters (literally so in the case of World Heritage Sites – see below) for various claims and contestations. In other words, sites of memory have functions to serve. Their role in embodying national sentiments in popular consciousness is well known: in this volume, Frolík recounts the national motivations underlying the study of Prague castle, and Mařková-Kubková relates the quest for saint's burials as authentic heirlooms of the Czech Republic. Without referring here to the ever growing literature on archaeology and nationalism, let us recall that archaeological sites can also serve to revive or create modern forms of religious nationalism, where ancient deities and civilisations are brought to bridge the centuries in a semblance of continuity, e.g. at the service of political claims (see Kohl *et al.* 2007). It is also worth mentioning that sites of memory prove particularly efficient in post-colonial settings, when the formal history recorded for the region or country in question is often that of (or written by) the colonisers, such that there is a need for alternative or additional ways to actively recover and broadcast tangible elements of identity.

Another function of the site of memory may well be, like the totem, that of expiation. Modern western attitudes to the past and its relations to the present – ownership or custodianship, for example – can become quite complex and at times schizophrenic (cf. Demoule and Stiegler 2008; Schlanger 2007). As Demoule points out (1992), there is a sense in which our heritage-enhanced *lieux de mémoire* represent a compensation for the threats we bring to their existence (including, ironically, the site of Lascaux itself, recently endangered again by human-induced bio-chemical degradations). We seem to partake in a system where scarcity and fragility, even when brought about by our own blunders and bulldozers, becomes in some cases positive assets, values to cherish and eventually capitalise on, in a vast system of what might be called 'mitigation by memorialisation'. In this respect, a well known concept that conveys this attitude – and that unites as a thread quite a few of the sites discussed in this introduction and throughout this volume – is that the World Heritage Site (WHS), as formalised by the 1972 convention and administered by UNESCO and its expert bodies. One irony of this highly successful system is clearly that the 'outstanding universal values' it is designed to embody are marshalled and carried through what are essentially local interests, be they related to symbolic prestige, status recognition or socio-economic concerns with tourism and development.

We have already seen with regards to the cradle of humankind how the very naming and demarcating of the area in question has given it the plausibility it would have otherwise lacked, and enabled it to embody the nationally-driven universalist aspirations of the 'Rainbow Nation'. The case of the lake dwelling is more complex: as Kaeser discusses, attempts to have the lake dwellings inscribed on the UNESCO managed list are only now gathering pace, some one hundred and fifty after the their significance was unanimously recognised. This delay is due to several factors: the nature of the four hundred and fifty or so sites in question, the difficulty of developing a coherent protection policy, their occurrence across the Alpine arc (including also France, Italy, Germany and Slovenia) requiring a particularly complex multi-state application, and also, last but not least, the reluctance of Swiss archaeologists to resuscitate an already 'mortgaged' identity and lend their authority to new mythical appropriations. A similar range of questions surrounds the Slav fortress of Mikulice in Moravia (for indeed there are in the region other sites of crucial contemporary significance, apart from Prague castle). Since the 1950s, archaeologists have been excavating an important concentration of churches, residences and tombs of Slav elites dating to the ninth century on the western bank of the Morava River in southern Moravia. These excavations had then two political significations. Most obviously, the search for the origins of Slav culture was related to the demarcation of the Slavs from Western Europe: this concern begun already in the nineteenth century, and was reinforced in Communist times. A second signification was specific to Czechoslovakia, which even after more than forty years saw difficult relations and lack of common traditions between its Czech and Slovak entities. In this respect the discoveries of the Great Moravia sites gave rise to the possibility of some formative Czech and Slovak bedrock. But history has moved on, as we know, and Czechoslovakia separated into two countries of which the Morava River became the border. Archaeologists carried on, and discovered recently another church, probably also belonging to Mikulice, but this time situated on the eastern

bank of the Morava, in today's Slovakia. And so, fifteen years after their separation, the Slovak and Czech Republics have joined hands in a common bid to inscribe the Mikulce-Kopany complex as a World Heritage Site – and when they succeed, will this be a site of memory of ancient Great Moravia, or of the former Czechoslovakia?

This example is good to conclude with, because – whether the reference will be to the distant or to the recent past (and of course the question will remain open) – archaeologists will have appreciated through the experience how important are their own actions in the present. Putting to rest the idea that ideological considerations are necessarily 'biases' or 'deviations' somehow superadded onto archaeological interpretations, they will acknowledge that practical and theoretical collaborations in uncovering the material remains of the past contribute to invest them with meaning, and with memory.

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